With the Coming of Even

By Agnes Grosser Herbertson.

"IT IS only the wind," said the Poet. He threw himself listlessly upon the hard leather couch, and turned his face to the wall.

The waves dashed madly upon the rocks below the little cottage; with angry shrieking the wind beat up the waves; and the moan of the storm came upon the wind. The Poet heard all these, and smiled wearily; young in years, he was old in spirit, in experience, in enjoyment; they had no charm for him.

He opened his lips now in discontent. "They have written so much about the sea that one is dead sick of it all." He sighed; "I can find in it nothing that has not been found before."

He himself had written not a little concerning the beauties of the sea, but his hand had been young in sooth when it held the pen, and his eyes not yet aweary.

He turned restlessly on the couch, bemoaning its hardness, and cursing the friend whose advice had sent him to recruit at this little fishing town, throwing all the burden of his disgust of life and his own feebleness into the cursing.

Then through and betwixt the voices of the storm came a wailing cry; the cry of a lost soul at God's gates; the cry for the unattainable from the lips of a child of earth. Rising higher and higher, it beat sobbingly upon the wind; it cried with the echo of the seagulls' warning; it scattered with the soft sea foam; and sank hushing and palpitating into the mutter of the waves. But only to rise again in a melody so triumphant as to override in its grandeur the voices of the angry ocean.

"It was the great sea-spirit," said the Poet.

But the sound had hardly seemed to come from the sea—rather from above.

He rose and walked to the window. "It was not the wind," he said, aloud.

It was still howling, but the music had ceased. He threw open the window and looked out. The wind fell in a blast upon his thin face, and tossed his hair. The sea shouted at him with angry menace. The look of the sky upon him was without a glint of a smile.

But again the music rose; but so softly that he had to strain his ears to catch the murmur of the half-hushed cradle-song. When it ceased again the voices of the storm seemed to be sinking, and the sea to be aweary of rage. The wind fell, and into the sky came a white glimmer where a silver star sought its entrance to the heavens.

The Poet stood there long, his arms resting on the sill, a dreamy look on his old-young face. There had come to him one of those moments which he fancied had left him forever, when his mind, like the worn-out sea, could hush its crying and be at peace.

It was only when, on his way to his bedroom later, he passed his landlady on the stairs that the problem of the strange music he had heard returned to him. "It seemed in the house, and yet not in the house," he murmured to himself, stopping her. "It has been a wild night, Mrs. Lewis."

"Indeed, and it has, sir, but it has settled down nicely."

"It was strange; but I thought I heard during the storm the sound of a violin. Some one has chosen a strange time to play."

"There's Miss White, sir; she has the room above yours. She teaches the fiddle in town—goes up every day. But she's not been playin' to-night, sir; and she's the only one in the place that can."

"O, that explains it! She must have been playing. No doubt it was she I heard."

"But she hasn't been playin' to-night, sir; I beg your pardon for saying it. I've been sittin' sewin' in the room just above her head, and never a sound have I heard. She's been that still, too."

The Poet laughed, but went on his way unconvinced. "Strange playing for a teacher of the violin," he thought, "and a strange time in which to play. She must be a strange girl."

It never occurred to him, in the arrogance of his few years, that she might be more than a girl. Indeed, he speedily forgot the whole matter. But in the dead of the night he rose, and, hastily donning a few garments, sat till the gray of the morning inscribing the thoughts of which the strange strains had sown the seed. He had found in the sea what he had never found before.

II.

With the golden eye of the sun upon him, he threw himself upon his tossing bed and slept until after noonday. Afterwards he rambled upon the shore, returning, tired and listless, at length to his chambers.

"Miss White, she's leavin' to-morrow mornin'," his landlady told him, as she laid his tea.

But the Poet was not interested. He wondered who Miss White might be. "Indeed?" he drawled languidly. He roused himself to poke the fire as a stopper to any other attempt at conversation; and Mrs. Lewis took the hint.

But in the evening when, with the coming out of the stars, a delicate thread of sound wound itself through the stillness, his interest came back to him. He threw himself upon his couch, and gave himself up to the pleasure of the sweet strains. Yet was it hardly pleasure, but more a fine pain. There was in the music naught of the wailing of yesterday's, nought of its pleading, naught of its passion, naught of its hope. It was like, the Poet told himself, a wire of polished silver, a wire that might turn and twist in one's flesh forever, yet never cause a mortal wound—only an infinitude of pain. But that of yesterday was the broad blade that kills at one stroke.

And again—as it broadened and deepened, and faded, like a moonbeam, away—"that of yesterday," he murmured, "was renunciation; with its battle, its victory, its sublime triumph, its transient peace; to-day's is resignation; a submittance which has naught of battle, of victory, of triumph, but only pain. To-day's is the end, an end that has no end."

But as he lay there, hands clasped behind his tired head, lips parted in a smile—a smile unlike his, for it had naught of scorn in it—there broke upon the silence the opening bars of a little prelude, dainty and sweet in itself, but the manner of its playing a veritable triumph in mediocrity. It wailed and cried laboriously above the Poet's head, and echoed above the window. It broke into painful snatches and indifferent rhythm.

The Poet sprang to his feet with an exclamation of impatience. "To spoil that with this!" he cried. "O, how can she?" He bit his lips wrathfully; but he did not intend to have his dream altogether spoiled, and, his anger conquering his weariness, ran lightly up the narrow stair.

He burst into the room of the stranger without preface or prelude, and began, in a high-pitched, womanish voice: "What in the world—" Then he paused, for he found she was crying. A little, middle-aged woman, with a wrinkled face, and funny elfin locks that fell in a cloud about it. She was standing in the middle of the room, with her music stretched out flatly on the table, and her violin and bow in her hands; standing, the tears running thickly down her pale cheeks, without making any attempt to wipe them away.

The Poet felt even angrier than before. Women of that age had no right to cry so openly, he thought; it went against all his theories. He was angry, too, that he had imagined her to be young.

"What an abominable row," he said, savagely. "And what are you crying about? But it is enough to make anyone cry!" He was not far from tears himself with vexation.

She looked up at him wistfully—she was but a little thing—and without any apparent surprise at his presence or abrupt entrance. "Ah! I should not have played again," she sobbed, "after—after I had given it up."

"Then I had guessed aright!" cried the Poet. "Yesterday it was renunciation, and to-day resignation. But what had you given up? What have you renounced? To what are you resigned?"

"I don't understand you," she said, uncomprehendingly. She laid her violin on the table, hanging over it as a mother does over her child.

"When you played yesterday—"

"But I didn't play yesterday!" she cried. "I wanted to—O, so badly! The storm cried to me; the wind cried; and the sea cried; and I heard them all. I took my violin in my hand, but I could tell nothing of what I heardid. O, how unhappy I was! Then I drew the bow backward and forward across the strings, but without touching them, and imagined it all. I caught the sobbing of the sea-god on the end of my bow; I sent out the cry of the gulls—"

"And the spray of the sea!" cried the Poet.

"And the eddy and gathering of the foam—"

"And the mutter of the waves!"

"And I thought of how I might have played had not something, something been wanting. O, I cried to God to give me the power to play as—as my soul could play, but for this thing—this me that cannot."

"The cry for the unattainable," the Poet whispered to himself, but she did not hear or heed him.

"I made a resolution." She dried her tears briefly at the recollection of it. "God would not give me my desire, so I gave up my semblance of it, for I wanted to keep my ideal. Then, when I had quite made up my mind, how I could have played then! But it would not come."

"The triumph," said the Poet. He smiled imperceptibly to himself.

"But to-day it was all so dreary. It was all over, and there was nothing left. And after I had thought how it was all over and my last note played, I thought I would again say good-by to my fiddle. And I fetched it out and played good-by, but without making a sound. And I felt not a bit sorry, but only a strange feeling here;" she put her hand on her heart. "So I played a real little bit to see if it would take it away."

He did not speak. His dream had come back to him; and his thoughts, like white clouds, floated far, far away.

"But I am going away to-morrow," she said, with white lips, but firmly; "and I will never play again. Will you take it, please? Will you take it with you? I shall never have one again." She placed violin and bow in his arms, and he let them rest there, seeing only the beauty of his dream.

Then he turned away, and her eyes followed him as if her heart lay in his arms. But at the door he paused: "You have given me a gift for which I can never thank you as I should," he said, simply.

She thought he was speaking of the violin, and her eyes, full of pain, smiled in corroboration of his words.

"But—I should never play again."

It was their first meeting—it was also their last.

In the early dawn the Poet blotted the last leaf of what he knew to be the greatest thing he had ever written, or would ever write.

"It will make the world weep," he said, through his tears. — Black and White.

THE GRAY FELT HAT.

What a queer thing is our soldier hat!
Who ever dreamed of a tile like that
To deck the head of a soldier boy—
The battle's hero and artist's joy!

Where are the feathers, buttons and braid
Wherein our forces were once arrayed—
The gay kepi, the bearskin cap,
The fancy helmet and jingling strap?

Gone where the woodbine used to twine—
Gone like the trout that broke the line—
Like the Spanish fleets—or last year's snows—
Gone where all the rubbish goes!

For the Yankee to-day is a practical man,
Who goes to war on a practical plan.
The militant Yankee's plain felt hat
Looks odd; but it doesn't roof a fiat.

Do you remember, in sixty-one,
When the late unpleasantness was begun,
The togs that were worn? What a masquerade!
A target excursion on parade—

Big souave breeches, gilt-tasseled boots,
Silk-frogged jackets, rainbow suits!
But those lads saw fighting—bled and died,
And learned to put fuss and feathers aside.

There's something rather businesslike
In that dull gray slouch without a spike;
It's warm against the winter's snows,
It keeps the sun from the eyes and nose;

And, wet or dry, it is devil-may-care,
With a very taking bulldog air.
You may poke it up, or flatten it out,
Roll it, stretch it or throw it about;

In fact, it's a rough-and-ready hat,
The Yankee himself, for the matter of that,
Is much the same, when it comes to style,
As his simple, useful, capable tile—

He marches and fights in a "git-thar" way,
And where he lights he's safe to stay.
Rifle shooting's his national game—
On land or sea it's all the same.

And a German helmet or Russian cap,
Or French contraption with fancy strap,
Or any other foreign fakir
Will find, if it runs against this Quaker,

That the slouch hat's built to stand a fight,
Goes nicely back of a rifle-sight,
And is just the size for Freedom's brat—
The Yankee lad in his gray felt hat!
—Tudor Jenks, in the Criterion.

Shopping Is Woman's Duty

Otherwise Who Would Spend the Money Man Earns?

"YOU here!" exclaimed the sweet-faced old lady, seating herself by a blooming young matron at the lunch counter. The two were Mrs. Golden Wedding and Mrs. June Bride, of Staten island. "Why, I didn't know you were coming into town to-day, my dear," she continued, "else we should have arranged to take that tedious ride together. I thought you'd finished your shopping."

"Does a woman ever finish shopping?" asked the young woman, querulously. "Mr. June Bride hurts my feelings about this shopping business. Will you tell me why men ridicule women so eternally about shopping? We are subjects of all sorts of newspaper jokes because we shop, and we are constantly taunted for it by those who pretend to care for us. One would think that the chief end and aim of every living woman's existence was to go into the stores and buy things that she doesn't need, just because they are advertised at a bargain."

All of the women at the counter in hearing distance gave the author of this outburst an encouraging sympathetic look.

"I'm downright glad you brought the subject up, dearie," answered Mrs. Golden Wedding, soothingly. "It's one I've often wanted to speak to you about. We poor women are all very much misunderstood about this shopping business."

"There, I always said so," exclaimed a little woman across the counter, who made no bones about listening to the conversation.

"The average man thinks the average woman enjoys shopping," continued the old lady. "She does not, but it is the business, the duty, I may say, of the average woman, and if she neglects it her household will soon go to rack and ruin."

"What's that?" asked Mrs. June Bride, eagerly.

"Simply this: It is man's business to make money and woman's business to spend it. If she spends it recklessly and foolishly and wastefully then she is a failure, but she does not do her full duty as wife and mother unless she knows how to spend her husband's money judiciously, wisely and well. Man twits woman about her propensity for shopping. If she didn't shop, who would buy things? Who has the more spare time, the man or the woman? The woman, of course, and it's her business to look out for the best value for her money."

"I just hate to shop," interrupted the young woman. "I always have a headache after a morning in the stores and nothing fags me more completely."

"Nine women out of ten feel the same way about it," answered Mrs. Golden Wedding, "but we might say so until doomsday and no man would believe us, except my husband. I gave him a lesson years ago that he won't forget."

"Do tell me about it," urged the younger one, and all the other women deliberately listened.

"Well, it was this way. He twitted me every morning and every afternoon about my shopping and seemed to be under the impression that I didn't know how to do anything else, didn't want to know how, and that was all I did. I was crazy to master French and German at the time and it fretted me because I had to do so much shopping, but we were very poor then and I considered it just as much a part of my business to spend our income to the best of my ability as it was his to make it. I spent a great deal of time making that money go a long way. At last I got tired of having fun poked at me, and I determined to quit shopping altogether. I did, and pretty soon chaos reigned in our little home. I ordered my meat and groceries from the boys who came to the door, never counting the cost or anything, and when any article needed replacing in the house, as something does nearly every day, you know, I let it go unreplaced. That was in the spring and, would you believe it, I didn't even get myself any clothes, but kept wearing my old last year's dresses. At the end of three months my husband struck. Oh, I wish you could have heard him! It just rejoiced my heart. He said his grocery bills were three times what they had been, that everything in the house was getting very shabby because I didn't take proper care of it, and that I myself looked too dowdy for anything, and that he was ashamed to be seen with me, for no man liked to go with a woman who looked conspicuously different from other women. And that's a good point for every woman to remember, dearie."

"Well?" exclaimed the young matron.

"I just flung myself in his arms and explained the whole matter to him, proving to him the absolute necessity for a woman to do shopping, and a great deal of it, in order to run a house without friction. He was converted, and from that day to this he always speaks of shopping as a dignified profession."

"It is that very thing, too," interrupted the little woman across the counter. "Pardon my freedom in speaking, but you are talking about something that touches all womankind, and I can't resist. A few years ago my daughter married. Now, if she had not been an expert shopper, they could never have gotten along on his income, but she read the advertisements in the papers, and I don't believe she ever spent a dollar in her life for which she has not received 100 cents' worth of goods."

"As this seems a sort of open discussion, I suppose I may speak also," put in a stout woman sitting next to Mrs. June Bride. "No matter how much money a man makes, I don't think a woman has a right to neglect her profession of shopping. But many do. How often does it happen that a woman, when she is first married and her husband is poor, tries to make every cent count, but neglects this wifely duty as his income increases. She leaves the marketing largely to her cook or the butler, and that means that the bills are three times as large as they should be; she orders her gowns from a dressmaker or tailor without stopping to find that she could buy the same material herself for one dollar a yard less, and when she needs anything for the house she gets the first thing that suits her, regardless of the fact that by going to another shop she could get it cheaper. The wife of a man with a constantly increasing income has grave responsibilities, as grave as the wife of the man who is barely making a living."

"Quite right," agreed Mrs. Golden Wedding. "I have no patience with these people who say: 'Oh, what is it for Mrs. Astorbilt to shop? Money is nothing to her.' The more money one has to spend the greater responsibility in spending it. Because a woman has all the money she wants, is it any easier for her to keep an establishment with 40 rooms and 20 servants in running order? No. Everything is equally proportioned in this world, and the more money one has the more complex is its expenditure."

"Why doesn't a man think of all this?" asked the newly married woman.

"You'll find, after you've lived a long while," answered the old lady, "that man is more a creature of habit than of thought, so far as his relations to woman go. It is a habit with him to say and think that shopping is her most foolish pastime and her best loved one, and my opinion is that it will be a long time before public sentiment in regard to this particular thing is changed. Every woman will have to content herself with doing a little home missionary work along this line among her men folks, endeavoring to convince them that unless woman did spend a great deal of time shopping his home would be comfortless and cheerless and his bills very large. Also that she can't be the same dainty feminine creature that he loves so well if she does not personally select and purchase the things which go a very long way toward enhancing her looks. Were it not for the women and their shopping I'd like to know where the country would be."

"I believe you," said in chorus half a dozen voices, and the young matron smiled as if greatly comforted.—N. Y. Sun.

Reflections of a Spinster.

Cupid is blamed for many matches made by cupidity.

The lowest life remembers; to the highest only is it given to forget.

Money may not buy happiness, but it will secure an imitation pleasing to most people.

A woman is said to be weak when she is not strong enough to resist temptation for two.

When a man says he loves a woman he usually means that he wants her to help him love himself.

It is possible for a spinster to be disappointed in lovers, but only the married are ever disappointed in love.

He who would win a woman must challenge her admiration, prove himself worthy of her regard, appeal to her sympathy—and then wound her.—Myrtle Reed, in Judge.

Beer Figures.

Hoax—You know Schneider, the bottler, who recently became a magistrate?

Joax—Yes.

"Well, he discharged a prisoner yesterday who was charged with stealing a dozen bottles of beer."

"So?"

"Yes: Schneider said that wasn't enough to make a case."—Philadelphia Record.

Lake Horror.

"You're up against the real thing now," muttered the fisherman, as he slowly wound in the tired muskallonge. —Chicago Tribune.

'TWAS BUT A DREAM.

Methought I saw, the other night,
A wildly cheering crowd
Which homage did unto a man
Of lordly mien and proud,
Who condescended now and then
To smile upon the throng
As he trod upon the roses
Which his path were strewn along.
There were lawyers, servants, preachers
And inventors there galore;
So many really famous men
I'd never seen before.
Indeed, I saw that in the crowd
(Their luster somewhat dim)
Edison and the airship man
Their hats took off to him.
My curiosity aroused,
I asked the haughty one:
"Who art thou? I'prithee tell me,
And why this homage done?"
When with a pitying glance at me
He proudly said: "I am
Inventor of a car door
The brakeman cannot slam!"

Then was I 'wakened by a jar
That drowned the engine's scream:
The brakeman had pass'd through the car—
Alas, 'twas but a dream!
—W. H. T. Shade.

They Missed the Major

By Emma A. Opper.

MRS. Rouse, the Hornbecks' next-door neighbor, sat and laughed to see what a good time the Hornbecks were having simply with a pint of molasses and some popcorn.

Trotty Strong was making the candy. Mrs. Rouse always thought of Trotty Strong as a Hornbeck, because she had lived with them since her eighth year, and she was 14 now. Charley popped the corn and Lily greased the places for the candy, and the baby sat in his high chair and looked on.

"They make candy every Saturday night," said Mrs. Hornbeck.

"They have the best times of any children I ever saw," said Mrs. Rouse.

"They do. They wouldn't have," said Mrs. Hornbeck, "if it wasn't for Trotty. Charley's a boy, and Lily's little yet. Trotty manages everything. Mr. Hornbeck calls her the major. What's we'd do without her is more than I know. I've only one pair of hands, and there are things that wouldn't be done if Trotty wasn't here to do them."

"I won't hear to her staying out of school to help, nor taking time when she ought to be doing her lessons; but my goodness! seems as if Trotty can study her arithmetic and darn stockings with one hand, and bake cookies and take care of baby with the other," said Mrs. Hornbeck.

And in the midst of the jolly racket, Mr. Hornbeck came in.

He did not laugh at the hubbub, nor pick up the baby, nor pinch Trotty's ear. "Mother," he said, "I've got a letter."

"Bad news, father?" said Mrs. Hornbeck, with quick alarm.

"Why, no, 'tisn't bad news," said Mr. Hornbeck. Mrs. Rouse, with kind consideration, rose to go.

"We'll bring you over some candy to-morrow, Mrs. Rouse," said Trotty. Trotty was thoughtful of everybody.

"You say it isn't bad news, father," said Mrs. Hornbeck, "but you don't look as if it was anything else."

"Well," said Mr. Hornbeck, "mother, the letter's from Mrs. Taylor; Sarah Taylor. It's to both of us. It's about you, Trotty. I guess I'd better read it out loud."

"Me?" said Trotty.

"Ah; Sarah Taylor," said Mrs. Hornbeck. Her face had changed.

"They want me—" she said, "to come and live with 'em! Well, I shan't go a step."

Mr. Hornbeck cleared his throat. "It might be good for you, Trotty," said he.

Trotty laughed. "You want to get rid of me, father!" she said.

"It will be a bad day's work for the Hornbeck family when we get rid of you, major," his father said. "But, you see, Mrs. Taylor is your father's cousin, and I suppose maybe she's got some claim—"

"Why, no, father," said Trotty, wide-eyed; "nobody's got a claim on me but you and mother, and Charley and Lily and the baby."

"That's right!" said Charley, loudly.

"But that isn't all, Trotty," his father said. "They're well off. They live in a nice big house, with a great lawn round it; I was over there to Payson once, and I saw the place."

"Why! but, father," said Trotty; "but I don't want to go and live there. You and mother took me when my mother died and I didn't have anybody, and I guess nobody else is going to get me now."

"I guess there ain't, either!" said Charley.

"I guess there ain't," Lily echoed.

Their mother had sat silent and sober.

"If we could have our way, Trotty," she said, "nobody should ever get you. But it's this way. I've been looking for this letter from Sarah Taylor. I heard six months ago that her last daughter was married, and that took me back to the time your mother died, Trotty—"

"And you took me," Trotty put in.

"Yes; but the Taylors came over here and we had a talk. Mrs. Taylor said she was your father's cousin, and I was just your mother's friend, and that 'twas she that ought to take you.

"But she had three girls of her own, and she saw how more than willing I was. She said, though, that some time, if her girls ever left her, maybe I'd hear from her. And now her last girl's married, and she and Mr. Taylor are alone—and I've heard from her," said Mrs. Hornbeck.

"Trotty," she said, "it's just this: They can do better by you. They're rich folks, compared to us, and you'll have a splendid home with them. You'll be ten times better off! It'll just about break my heart, but we've got to do what's for your good, Trotty."

The candy was burning and filling the kitchen with its smudge, but nobody noticed it. Trotty bent over the baby's high chair; she hid her face against his chubby, warm cheek.

"I've been here," she cried, with a sob, "'most ever since I can remember—ever since Lily was a baby, and the first thing you did you made me a red plaid dress with a pocket in it—and—I—I don't want to go and live with any Taylors!"

One evening five weeks later Mrs. Rouse went over to the Hornbecks'.

Mrs. Hornbeck was darning stockings, and Lily was helping her, with her awkward little fingers. Charley was in a chair by the stove, with a flannel cloth tied round his swollen cheeks. Charley had the mumps.

"Well," said Mrs. Rouse, "I can't get used to it. It does seem so funny here without Trotty!"

"Funny!" said Charley, somewhat fiercely; "if you call it funny!"

"There, Charley," said his mother. "He's been crotchety, like that, ever since Trotty has been gone," she explained to Mrs. Rouse. "And I don't know but we all have."

"Isn't it most a month?" said Mrs. Rouse.

"It's four weeks yesterday," said Mrs. Hornbeck. For, once the decision had been made that it was best to let Trotty go to the Taylors, Mrs. Hornbeck, with sad firmness, had lost no time in putting the plan into execution. "It seems like four months."

"If Trotty was here I shouldn't be darning stockings from Monday's wash to Saturday night; Trotty darned all the stockings—she would do it. I do my best to keep ahead of my work, but without Trotty, somehow—there! I won't complain another word!"

"I suppose she's contented? You can tell by her letters," said Mrs. Rouse.

"Well—" said Mrs. Hornbeck, dubiously.

"She isn't contented!" Charley burst out. The words were like a cork bursting from a bottle. "She don't like it; I know she don't. She don't want to live 'way off there with the Taylors."

"No, she don't," said Lily.

"She hasn't any business off there; she belongs here," said Charley, in a querulous climax of unhappiness; it hurt him to talk, and he growled. "We're so lonesome we can't stand it. And everything bad that's happened has happened since Trotty went away, mother, hasn't it? I don't believe," said Charley, "I'd have had the mumps at all if Trotty'd been here."

"No, nor I shouldn't have cut me with the bread knife. Nor—nor Mr. Neeson's shop wouldn't have burned up!" said Lily, with conviction.

Mrs. Hornbeck laughed, lifting the baby from the floor. But her laugh was tremulous.

Suddenly, in the silence that followed, Charley started up. He had heard the click of the gate latch.

"It's father," said Mrs. Hornbeck; but Charley sprung from his chair. That light, swift step on the walk was not his father's. Mrs. Hornbeck paused, motionless, but Lily scurried to the door.

"Trotty!" she shrieked; "oh, Trotty!"

It was Trotty; Mrs. Rouse could make out that much, though she could see nothing but the feather on Trotty's hat. Trotty herself was lost in what seemed a whirling vortex, composed of Charley and Lily and their mother, with the baby on her arm.

"Yes, it's me," said Trotty; "it is. Yes, and I've come for good. My trunk's here, and Jim Parks is going to bring it up. Yes, the Taylors knew I was coming."

"Trotty, dear," said Mrs. Hornbeck, her voice shaking, "what does it mean?"

"I was so lonesome, mother," said Trotty, simply. "They were good to me; splendid. And it was all just as father said; it's a big house, and a great porch with white pillars. And there's lovely things in the parlor, besides the piano—big pictures and plush chairs—but it didn't make any difference," said Trotty. "I was so lonesome all the time, lonesome for all of you.

"I didn't say anything. But it kept getting worse, and I guess finally I showed it, because Mrs. Taylor asked me if I was homesick, and I said yes. And the very next day," said Trotty, "the letter came—"

"The letter?" said Mrs. Hornbeck.

"Yes," said Trotty. "I've got it." She found it in her pocket and read it out.

"'Dear Trotty: Come back home, because we can't stand it any longer without you.' Charley wrote it, and he and Lily signed it, and the baby. I guess they helped the baby some, but he signed it," said Trotty, with tender laughter.

"Well, well! I never dreamed of it. I never knew one word about it!" said their mother.

Trotty folded the letter. "I shall keep it," she said, "always. I showed it to Mrs. Taylor, and she asked me if I wanted to come; and I didn't know what to say, but I—I cried some. And then she and Mr. Taylor talked it over, and—well, here I am," said Trotty, joyously.

It was a moment when words would have been vain and feeble. Nobody said anything but the baby, and he crowed loudly and pounded Trotty with his little soft fist.

As for Mrs. Rouse, her feelings were too much for her. She cried softly into her apron. And there might have been a general flowing of happy tears if Trotty had not interrupted it.

"It's Saturday night, do you know it?" she cried. "Where's the molasses?" And Charley put another stick of wood in the stove, and Lily rushed into the pantry.—Boston Globe.

Just Like Other People.

"You look nice enough to eat," exclaimed the youth.

"And so I do," replied the maiden, "three times a day."—Ohio State Journal.